CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL of the PACIFIC LIBRARY

The Modern Churchman.

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IN MEMORIAM.

William Danks, 1846—1916.

The death of Canon Danks, of Canterbury, early in April, is a severe loss to the cause of sane and comprehensive Liberal Churchmanship. A member of the Council of the Churchmen's Union, he was in close sympathy with its ideals, and his life and teaching were an excellent embodiment of them.

His Yorkshire friends will remember him with gratitude. As Vicar of St. Margaret's, Ilkley, Vicar of Richmond, Archdeacon of Richmond, Canon Residentiary of Ripon, he worked hard. He raised large sums of money for Church building and restoration, and in an age of financial statistics such success must needs seem highly meritorious, yet he would have counted it among the least of his services to the Church of Christ. It was as a Christian teacher in a difficult age that he was pre-eminent. A well-known Oxford scholar who had listened to and preached many University sermons, when asked to name the best University preacher he had heard, named Canon Danks. Yet Canon Danks was not a profound scholar; he had no flow of eloquence nor charm of delivery; but he could speak to men's business and bosoms, whether they happened to be Californian ranchers or University graduates. There was a depth, a breadth, a strength, a freshness, a tenderness about his treatment of his themes which made his sermons extraordinarily helpful to those who are usually unaffected by pulpit rhetoric, but have themselves been through deep waters and hard experiences. His, however, were no impromptu, emotional utterances; he despised and declined to imitate "the few words" type of preacher; he composed his sermons with extreme care, and as a consequence they are marked by great clearness of arrangement, fecility of diction, and that simplicity which is

the product of the highest art. Some of his sermons composed between 1884-1890 were published under the title *The Church on the Moor*. The volume went through three editions. He has preached many sermons since then which are at least as worthy of publication in book form, and we hope it may be possible to publish a selection of them. If the plain man can be induced to read sermons, these are the sermons for him.

In a sermon of his on the death of Moses—"Death on the Mount of Vision"—Canon Danks has the following passage:—

> "The city of God shall some day be built, and within its walls there shall be religion without cant, love without selfishness, work without dishonesty, patriotism without party spirit, and zeal without bigotry. Are you amongst the builders of it? If you died to-night, to-morrow, or next year, is there a stone more in its foundations for your having lived and worked?"

Those who knew him, and think of these questions in connection with him, will answer "Yes."

CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE.

By the Rev. J. C. Hardwick, B.A., Altrincham.

Tolerance has in these days become a popular virtue, and is everywhere cultivated or affected, at least in those circles with any pretentions to enlightenment. Is it, however, at the same time an ambiguous virtue? Is it perhaps, as some have held, no virtue at all, but a moral weakness or even a vice?

It is certain that much of the tolerance upon which we pride ourselves to-day has a no more reputable origin than indifference. And the moral value of that kind of tolerance is not high. It is a product either of moral callousness or of intellectual haziness. If you have not taken the trouble to form reasonable opinions of your own, it will call for no serious self-restraint to tolerate those of other people. You will have found no particular reason to regard one set of opinions as in any way preferable to another—*quot homines, tot sententiae* will be your motto, and your excuse.

Perhaps, then, the modern man who takes a pride in his tolerance, is suffering from moral or intellectual lassitude. He takes credit for something which is perhaps not very creditable.

Our particular problem, however, is "Is it possible for a *Christian* to be tolerant?" It appears, at first sight, impossible if he be a *convinced* Christian, for a strong conviction with regard to the truth of a proposition carries with it an equally strong conviction of the falseness of its opposite, and we cannot regard with equanimity the dissemination of opinions which we believe to be false, any more than we can allow free play to actions which we believe to be wrong. It would, indeed, seem that only a man who doubts the possibility of the human attainment of truth, or who has no belief in the majesty of conscience, and the reality of moral standards, can be completely tolerant. Only such a man can regard the prevalence of falsehood and injustice with indifference.

For instance, only one who has no firm conviction of the moral value of freedom as the right of the human personality can be tolerant of slavery. And in religion, only one who is indifferent to religious truth and sceptical about its possibility can be tolerant of atheists or of heretics (*i.e.*, promulgators of false religious or moral doctrines), or of "the awful touch of superstition" (the great form of falsehood in religion).

And yet, after all, is there not something in the modern appreciation of tolerance besides mere moral and intellectual laxity? Has it not a foundation in something very much better?

In certain cases perhaps it has. Tolerance may, for instance, have its origin in a belief that human personality has rights of its own in deciding for itself upon its own creed, and even its own moral standards (provided of course that these are not manifestly opposed to the interests of others).[1]

A further inducement to toleration is the feeling that force of any kind, is a very poor means for the production of either orthodoxy or morality. (It is to be noted that in a polite age,

[1] N.B.—There are many persons of the most "advanced" and anarchical views, who are lamentably conventional and peaceable members of society. Either their logic or their courage fails them.

like that in which we live, force takes other and more insidious shapes than in a ruder epoch. Exclusion from social privilege, and withdrawal of the means of subsistence are the subtler shapes it takes to-day).

To the believer in reason, force seems a particularly unreliable weapon, and one that is likely to go off at the wrong end. Such an one believes that *education* (including example, inspiration, persuasion, and so forth) is the right and efficient means by which individuals should be got to adhere to the right way of thinking and acting. He holds, in brief, that truth is great and will prevail, and that, in the words of Milton, "She needs no policies, no stratagems, nor licencings, to make her victorious . . . give her but room." "Truth," in the words of Epictetus, "conquers by itself, opinion by foreign aids." The modern believer in reason adopts the advice of Gamaliel, "Refrain from these men and let them alone," and the reasons he gives are the same. He believes in the method of *reductio ad absurdum*, for there is a survival of the fittest even in the world of ideas. Nor is it to be forgotten that a polite tolerance, or even some measure of countenance, has often done more to blight an objectionable growth than more hasty methods of repression. Aggressive politicians, we are told, can survive ostracism and persecution, but not invitations to dinner.

There would appear, then, to be two species of tolerance. The one springing from intellectual and moral indifference, the other from a belief in the value of freedom and in the supremacy of reason. There is the tolerance of scepticism and the tolerance of liberalism.

These two species of tolerance stand on a different moral level. The first is to be condemned, but the second cannot but be respected. We shall make a serious mistake to unite both in the same condemnation. In doing so we should set ourselves against what are perhaps the most promising features of progress in the modern world, *i.e.*, a recognition of the sacredness of personality, and the superiority of a moral and intellectual over a material appeal.

Furthermore, many individuals (and those not the least competent to judge) feel that it is certainly easy to believe that human knowledge in many spheres is far too inadequate to justify an intolerant dogmatism. Though, of course, as Tyrrell has pointed out, "The feebleness of the human mind finds extreme positions so much simpler to understand, and so much easier to maintain."

The intolerance of some nineteenth century materialists was certainly as unjustified, and as much to be deprecated as that of some of the theologians by whom they were opposed, and whose intolerance they were the first to complain of. And to-day, the intolerance of some anti-clericals is nothing short of fanatical.[1]

"The pride of a pretended knowledge," to use Roger Bacon's words, is a pestilential thing, whether it be found in the heart of a mediaeval scholastic, or of a modern scientist or politician. It can never be right to attempt to force our views upon others, unless we have very good reason for believing that the whole truth is upon our side; and this is just what, too often, we are unable to do, at least in the opinion of those who have devoted most time and intelligence to the discovery of the truth. Was it not Montaigne who observed that one should be very sure of one's opinion, before proceeding to burn alive those who do not hold it?

There is, in fact, a good deal to be said for the spirit which declines to dogmatise, at any rate *de minimis*, in moral and intellectual matters.[2] Those are certainly to be blamed who wish to make their own decisions about trifles the standards by which to mis-judge their fellow-men.

Perhaps here one might allude to the question of different forms of religious worship. The recognition of the part that temperament plays in the form a man's religious expression will take, leads us to regard with a more tolerant eye those whose form of religious worship differs in some respects from our own. One man finds more satisfaction in the Mass, another in a

[1] N.B.—This is particularly the case in France, which has become in some ways the European country where thought is least free (cf. Bodley's *France*).

[2] Some of the Mediaeval Scholastics were particularly absurd in this respect.

Prayer Meeting; one is uplifted by the solemn and restrained and perhaps rather cold ritual of an English cathedral, another by the warmth and fervour of the Salvation Army. Is there not room for tolerance and for variety?

Has there not been too much of the censorious spirit among enthusiastic adherents of certain types of worship?

The late William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience,* contrasting Catholicism with Protestantism, very pertinently remarks that certain individuals can only satisfy their imagination and aesthetic requirements by what may be termed a "Catholic" type of worship: their religious life needs a Catholic richness of environment if it is to flourish. To those who are fascinated by the extraordinary attractiveness of Catholicism, evangelical Protestantism seems flat, stale, and unprofitable. "Protestantism to Catholic eyes will always shew the almshouse physiognomy."[1]

On the other hand, to the colder Protestant, Catholicism seems to contain extravagant and irrational and superstitious elements, which irritate and scandalise his moral or intellectual susceptibilities, and are, in his opinion, offensive to God.

The study of different psychological types has made it difficult to believe that we shall ever have any approach to complete uniformity of religious worship and custom—or even of belief (for are not differences of belief largely temperamental; one man is constitutionally optimistic, another pessimistic, another mystical, another rationalist, and so on).[2]

These considerations—that truth is not easily attained, and that different temperaments have different tastes and adopt different attitudes—should induce us to judge our neighbours with reserve and with charity. We have no right to condemn, offhand, those whom a difference of temperament, or of mental outlook, may render somewhat incomprehensible to us. To condemn what one does not understand, is as easy as it is illegitimate, but it is to have turned one's back upon a truly liberal and scientific view of human nature, and especially that side of human nature which expresses itself in religion.

[1] *op. cit.* p. 461.

[2] Cf. James, classification of "tender-minded" v. "tough-minded" in *Pragmatism.* p. 12.

Yet, at the same time, we shall do well to remember that in certain directions complete tolerance is not possible. Where the great fundamentals of reality and of morality are concerned, to adopt that attitude is to come perilously near acknowledging ourselves, in the deepest things of life, to be standing on insecure foundations. Where questions of Christian principle are concerned, Christians cannot allow themselves to enjoy the luxury of indefiniteness, and though they will never persecute, they must assert and deny, they must praise and condemn.

And at this point it would perhaps be well to observe that there exists a certain haziness in the minds of many as to what is meant by Christian *principle*. It means a principle taught by Christ. To treat the phrase, "Christian principle," as some have treated it, so that it becomes the equivalent of a sectarian shibboleth, is to debase language. This is a form of sacrilege, for words are, or should be, sacred. To corrupt a word is to debase the coin of thought, and to render truth even more inaccessible than it is.

The whole question of tolerance, when carefully considered, admits of no easy or ready-made solution. Like all moral problems it is complex; and like so many others its solution, perhaps, lies in a mean between extremes—narrow intolerance on the one hand, flaccid indifferentism on the other.

We must necessarily have our convictions, and, if we are Christians, those convictions will be strong and definite. Moral and religious standards which we believe to be false will meet with little mercy at our hands—though a distinction will be preserved between the ideas themselves and those who entertain them. To persecute is contrary to the spirit of Christianity—a religion that believes in the sanctity of the human personality, and in the ultimate supremacy of truth.

To the Christian above all belongs as an essential characteristic that charity which "suffereth long and is kind," not merely in phrases but in heart.

His belief in the providence of God gives the Christian patience—the great antidote to hasty intolerance; his belief in the divine sonship of men, makes him appeal neither to force nor fear, but to conscience and reason—the Divine Logos in the heart of each.

THE ADULT SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

By E. H. C. Wethered, M.A., LL.B.,
Vice-President of the Council of the National Adult School Union.

The Adult School Movement commenced as one of the many attempts made during the last century to supply the need for better educational facilities for the British people, created by the rapid rise of the Democracy to political power.

The movement had its origin in the "First Day" Schools of the Society of Friends, which may be said first to have been definitely founded with the opening of Severn Street School at Birmingham, in 1845. From Birmingham the movement spread to many other centres, and on the 31st December, 1914, there were 1,883 Schools (1,090 for men, 726 for women, and 67 mixed), with a total membership of 81,908 scholars. In addition there were 202 classes for boys and girls, with a membership of 3,763, carried on in connection with the work of various Schools. All these Schools have, since 1897, been federated in a National Organisation, now known as "The National Adult School Union."

The founders of the movement were convinced, as also are their successors of to-day, that religion and education are inseparable parts of one whole, and that "there can be no severance of the educational from the religious; true education is religious; true religion is educational; both are advanced by fellowship. To attempt to separate them is to misunderstand both." The Schools which the movement has called into being are, in accordance with this fundamental idea, definitely religious associations. Each School aims at being a "School-Community," the object of which is to work out the social and educational aspirations of its corporate life in obedience to a spiritual ideal.

The work of an Adult School is conceived as involving three main duties:—

(1) The spreading of an Evangel.
(2) The work of Education.
(3) The expression of both Evangel and Education in active and practical Service in the national life.

The Evangel. We are convinced that all permanent social and political progress in the world is dependent on the spread among men of a real and vital expression of the Spirit of Christ. We do not believe that uniformity in belief and practice is either possible or desirable in the Christian Church, but we are convinced that unity in spirit, unity in sympathy, aspiration and purpose, is possible, and not only possible, but essential, if the Church is to fulfil its mission of establishing on earth the Kingdom of God. We have sought to act upon this principle in the organisation of our Schools. No dogmatic, or other tests, are imposed on those who wish to become members. All that is asked of an intending member is that he, or she, shall be possessed of a real desire to join the School and take part in its work. Having joined, he finds himself a member of a living Fellowship, sustained and animated by a common spirit—a spirit of active and practical Brotherliness, which is distinctive of the Adult School Movement. It is difficult to describe. To be understood, it must be experienced. This consciousness of union in one spirit, expressing itself in a comprehensive and vital fellowship, is the only bond of union we recognise or find that we require. Its possession has absorbed among us most of the lesser loyalties of class, sect and party, which normally divide men, and bound us to one another in a fellowship which is at the same time both sustaining and vitalising.

Although we have no formal creed, a remarkable unity of religious experience has become apparent in recent years. We are gaining a new vision of God and man. Slowly, but surely, the Schools are evolving a re-interpretation of the Christian Message in the language of to-day, and in close relation with the facts and needs of the real life of the community. Jesus of Nazareth is being made once more to live and move among things of real life. The tremendous import of the fact of Christ, as the revelation of the potential capacity and destiny of every man, of the capacity of the human to express the Divine, is gradually coming home to us as we study the Bible

library in the reverent, but free, atmosphere of our Schools, and bring to bear upon it, as we are able, all the light that modern scholarship and the growing experience of our corporate life can give. The mission of the Church, the Quest and Establishment of the Kingdom of God, is ceasing to be a theological abstraction, and is beginning to assume living form, and to take its proper place in our consciousness as the ultimate goal, on earth, of religion and life.

Education. But if the Message of the Kingdom is to be made effective as the supreme creative and directing force in the affairs of men, religious experience, however deep, is not sufficient. The Mind of man is the medium by which the power of the spirit is transmitted to the machinery of the political and social life of the world, which provides the material out of which the Kingdom shall be built. But the mind does not grow straight and strong unless the laws of its growth are understood and complied with. It needs to be tended, fed, and trained by exercise. The Church of the future must be educative as well as inspirational. We seek, therefore, to equip and train the minds, as well as awake the souls, of our members, and thus to give them, not so much exact knowledge, as the power to think and judge and act for themselves. We do not aim at producing scholars, but to acquire the power to take of the scholars the material their labour has provided, and weave it into the fabric of every-day thought and life.

Service. Lastly, we have come to feel very strongly that to inspiration and education must be added Service, active work in the real life of the State, if growth and power in the Christian character and spirit are to be secured and maintained. We aim, therefore, to send forth from our Schools into the ordinary life of the community, of city, town, village, as the case may be, men and women filled with the passion of a great ideal, men and women held in the grip of an imperative call to *service in the community as an expression of their religion.*

Methods. The central feature of the work of the Schools is the weekly meeting for consideration of the "Lesson." This meeting takes place, in the case of most Men's Schools, at an early hour on Sunday mornings, usually 8-30 or 9 o'clock, but in the Midlands often as early as 7-30 a.m. Women's Schools meet on Sunday afternoons, or on an evening in the week. The "Lesson" is a Bible lesson, but a Bible lesson conceived on somewhat distinctive lines. Its character is, perhaps, best described as an attempt to study the problems of religion and life in the light of the teaching of the Bible, our aim being to apply the teaching of the Bible to the practical needs of to-day. A few Schools prepare their own programme of Lessons, but the bulk of the Schools frame their programmes on a Lesson Sheet issued annually by the National Adult School Union. This Lesson Sheet consists of a syllabus of subjects for each Sunday in the year, with Bible references and suggestions for further reading from books easily accessible to our members. The subjects are arranged in courses of varying length running over a number of Sundays. At the time of writing, the Schools are engaged on a long course, extending over six months, under the general title "The Quest of the Kingdom," a study in the growth of the idea of the Kingdom of God. The main subject is divided into a number of sub-titles, and these in turn into lessons for each Sunday. The treatment of the main subject will be apparent from the sub-titles, which are as follows:—

(1) The Pioneers. (A Study of the rise of the Messianic Hope from the writings of the pre-exilic Prophets).
(2) Jeremiah—the Prophet of a Spiritual Kingdom.
(3) "Behold the Man." (A short study from the Synoptics of Jesus' interpretation of His office as Messiah).
(4) The Gospel of the Kingdom in the hearts of men. (A Study in the Fourth Gospel).
(5) The Kingdom in the Adult School.

In connection with the Lesson Sheet there is issued a list of suitable daily Bible readings, arranged, each week, so as to bear on the subject for the following Sunday's lesson.

Many of the Schools divide the time into two parts, and provide a programme of short lectures either before or after

the Lesson. To an increasing extent these Lecture programmes are ceasing to have the miscellaneous character they formerly had, and are being framed so as to have some definite relationship with the Lesson for the day.

The need of guidance and help to our many class leaders led us, in the year 1911, to supplement the Lesson Sheet by the issue of a Lesson Handbook.* This book has developed in its scope each year, and, though still open to much improvement, is in its present form a very stimulating and suggestive piece of work. It consists of an introduction to each group of Lessons and Notes on each Lesson, together with a short statement of the aim to be kept in view in presenting the Lesson. References to other literature, to supplement the Bible references, and suggestions for suitable lecture subjects, where a lecture programme is arranged, are included, together with some simply framed questions on the lesson for stimulating thought and discussion. Suggestions as to suitable hymns are also added. All the members are encouraged to assist in working out the lesson, which, after a short opening by the class leader or one of the members, is conducted on conversational lines, with ample opportunity for discussion. The Schools always open and close with short periods of devotional exercise. The Hymnbook used, known as the Fellowship Hymnbook, has been specially compiled, and contains a very fine collection of hymns.

This weekly meeting, however, is the beginning, not the end, of the School's work. Around this, as a centre, other activities of an educational and social character, ever tend to come into being. Many Schools maintain Social Clubs; many have one or more Study-Circles meeting during the week; others provide Book Clubs; others, regular courses of Lectures, Classes and Clubs for Boys and Girls, Meetings for Mothers, Infant Consultations and Mothers' Schools, Thrift Clubs, Allotment Societies, work among discharged prisoners, care of the blind and crippled, and many other forms of social service.

* The Adult School *Lesson Sheet* and *Handbook*, for 1916, are published by Headley Bros. The Lesson Sheet at 4d. per dozen, or 2/3 per 100 post free. The Handbook at 8d. (paper), or 1/3 (cloth), post free.

In recent years, the need of providing opportunities for more intensive study has arisen. To meet this need, special "Lecture Schools" are now being held in ever-increasing numbers. They are usually held over the week-end, but courses of lectures are also arranged on week-days, and a number of "Summer Schools" are now held every year for periods of a week and longer. A number of competent teachers, in the whole or part time service of the Movement, are now engaged in this work, and between 750 and 1,000 Lectures were delivered in 1913-14.

Intimately connected with the development of the Lecture-School work is the recent establishment of "Fircroft," a residential College for working-men students, at Bournville, Birmingham, and three non-residential Settlements located at York, Leeds, and Birkenhead, respectively, and a number of Hostels or Guest Houses, situated in country districts. Of these Guest Houses there are now five,—Friedensthal, near Scarborough; Heys Farm, near Clitheroe; Uffculme, Moor Green, Birmingham; Penscot, near Winscombe, Somerset; and Old Hall, near Maidstone, in Kent. At "Fircroft" and the Settlements regular Courses of Study, covering a wide range of subjects, are undertaken. At the Guest Houses, parties are accommodated at cheap rates for purposes of study, for the week-end or longer periods, and also for purposes of rest and recreation. The work done at these centres in week-end and "Summer Schools is coming to be recognised as of quite exceptional value. Precious associations cluster round them, and provide that atmosphere of continuity and expectation which is of such great value to educational work. It would, indeed, seem that Lecture Schools, conducted under such conditions, are likely to be the medium of a new Evangelism. Already in some of the Schools, and largely in consequence of the rich and deep experience of wonderful fellowship gained during a visit to one of the Guest Houses for a week-end School, there is arising a demand, not only for wider knowledge, but for a fuller opportunity for worship and communion than

is afforded by the ordinary school meetings. Our policy hitherto has been to encourage our members to seek satisfaction of these "deeper needs" by becoming members of some recognised Church. But, alas, experience shows that the demand is not being so met, and how best to meet it is one of the pressing problems of the movement which yet awaits solution.

Another problem which presses heavily is the question of teachers. The movement is a lay movement entirely, and that it is able to provide a high level of scholarship is clear from a perusal of the Lesson Handbook, and other literature issued by the National Union, but the difficulty of providing the 1,883 Schools with suitable men and women to act as wise and efficient guides is a matter of the greatest difficulty. No very high technical qualifications are needed. A real religious experience, broad outlook, a quick intelligence, knowledge of men, a grip of real affairs, sympathy and willingness to learn, and a fair working knowledge of the Bible, such as every Church member ought to possess, are the chief qualifications required. The difficulty of obtaining the regular help of such men and women in sufficient numbers, is, however, astonishingly great.

The Adult School Movement is a "modern," but at the same time seeks also to be a Catholic, movement. It is still in its infancy. It has its traditions, but is unfettered by them. It is capable of infinite variations. Its methods can be adapted to all sorts and conditions of men and women. It is confident as to the power and inevitable triumph of its central message. It is ready and anxious to learn as to the implications and applications of its message. It is willing to experiment as to its methods. We seek but to take some part, though it be only a small part, in the great task which awaits the Christian Church—the re-interpretation and representation of Christ's Message of the Kingdom.*

* The offices of the National Adult School Union are situated at 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, London, S.W. Any further information about the Movement will be gladly given by the Office Secretary, Mr. George Peverett. The Adult School Magazine, *One and All*, is published monthly (Headley's, 1d.)

THE OUTFIT OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN.

By the Rev. W. A. Cunningham Craig, M.A., Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.

IV.—His Creed.

To speak of the Creed is to touch the most delicate part of our subject. It is here that the position of the modern Churchman is more liable to misunderstanding, and perhaps more open to attack than on any other point. For after all the attitude which he takes up towards the Bible or the Prayer Book is much the same as that taken up by other Churchmen. It is different from theirs in degree rather than in kind. He goes further in the direction in which they have moved a little. Other Churchmen have gone with him at least part of the way. The demand that he makes to treat the Bible or the Prayer Book critically, is one that most of his fellow Churchmen,—if they are to be consistent,—are bound to concede. But with the Creeds it is,—or it appears to be,—different. They have been the storm-centres of controversy. Here the demand which the modern Churchman makes is one that has to encounter strenuous opposition. "Criticise the Bible, Revise the Prayer Book, but hands off the Creeds,"—that has been and still is the watchword of a large and powerful section within the Church. For the modern Churchman that watchword represents an impossible position. He is compelled to take up the same kind of attitude to the Creeds that he does to the Bible or the Prayer Book, and he has to show how and where he stands. In what sense, then, is the Creed part of the outfit of a modern Churchman?

The Gospels themselves do not contain a formal Creed. Our Lord's immediate followers only required some simple confession of faith, viz., that Jesus is the Christ, from their converts as a condition of admission to the Christian society. The earliest Creeds* were drawn up for use at Baptism, and

[* See *var. lect.*, the Creed of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts viii. 37). He was a Jewish proselyte, and believed already in Jehovah and His Spirit. For Gentile converts a Creed professing belief in the One God or Divine Father, in the Divine Son and Divine Spirit, was required.—Ed. *M.C.*

were of a simple character. No doubt the New Testament contains the elements of a creed; it may be true that every statement in the Creeds rests upon some evidence in the New Testament; that it can "be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture;" but that is not, and never can be, the same thing as if you found the Creed fully set out in the pages of the New Testament.

The more elaborate Creeds are the products of a later age in the Church's history They are the result of reflection and experience. They are the interpretation which the age that produced them placed upon the original facts of the Christian revelation. And when you come to reckon it up, you will see that the age which produced the Creeds was after all a comparatively short period in the life of the Church. It may be true that the Church was Divinely guided in that work, it may even be true that that age possessed a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit than other ages have enjoyed, yet it remains a fact that it is much more than a thousand years since the Creeds assumed their present form. The interpretation which one age places upon a series of facts cannot possibly be final. Human thought and human language pass through a multitude of changes. Words no longer bear the same meaning that they did. To claim that when we say the Creed to-day, we say it in exactly the same sense in which it was said by those who first drew it up, is to contradict the plainest teachings of experience. The same words, the same phrases, do not mean to us what they meant to the men of the fourth century. But we have given those words a prominence in our corporate Church life which has increased the difficulty. We repeat the Creed at almost all our services. We have made it the official standard of our beliefs. We have treated it as a test of orthodoxy, and used it as a condition of membership and ministry in the Church.

Let me illustrate what I mean. There are certain expressions in the Creed, which even the most orthodox Churchman only understands in a symbolical sense. "He descended into Hell,"

"He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God." It may well be that to those who first used them, these words were taken as descriptive of literal fact. It was quite natural for them to express the things of eternity in the terms of time and space. Heaven was above and Hell was beneath. But to us that is the language of pure symbolism through and through. Its only value is that it presents spiritual truth in the clothing of metaphor. We have agreed among ourselves to place upon that language an interpretation which in the first instance it certainly did not bear. Or you may put the same thing in another way. When I learnt to say the Creed as a child, it meant to me something much more literal than it does to-day. I have gradually shifted the emphasis in my own mind from what is outward to what is spiritual.

Again there are other phrases in the Creed about which the same measure of agreement has not been reached. To some Churchmen they mean one thing, to others something quite different. We all say "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," but we draw very different inferences from those words. Ask a number of Churchmen what they understand by "the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Resurrection of the Body," and you will find again that the same words cover a great variety of belief. "He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead;" to some these words convey the idea of a visible return of Christ on the clouds of heaven, of a great assize to which all mankind will be summoned and a final separation between the good and the bad. To others that is merely a pictorial representation of spiritual truths which are in operation all through human history. And between those two extreme views you will find many varieties of interpretation. At any rate we are content to admit that in the case of those clauses of the Creed differences of opinion are quite permissible.

There are two other clauses about which at the present time the difficulty is more acute, "Born of the Virgin Mary," "Rose again the third day from the dead." Whatever we may say about the clauses that we have been discussing, there can be no doubt that the Church has been practically unanimous in attaching to those words only one meaning. It has regarded them as statements of literal objective fact. But we are only speaking the truth when we say that the fuller study which has

been made possible in our days, has shown that the evidence on which these statements have hitherto been accepted is not so strong or so convincing as we thought it was. There is a reasonable element of doubt. There is room among candid students of history for difference of opinion. The modern Churchman cannot shut his eyes to those facts. Common honesty compels him to admit that old questions have got to be reviewed in a new light. He does not want to re-write the Creeds or to deny what generations of Christians have believed. What he does urge is that these clauses, which up to the present have been understood in only one way, should for the future be reckoned among the other clauses of the Creed about which differences of belief and interpretation are recognised as permissible. He does insist that in the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to require a literal assent to these clauses from all as an indispensable condition of membership or ministry in the Christian Church.

The Creed of a modern Churchman is sometimes represented as if it were something vague and indefinite, as if it represented a minimum of Christian belief. That is wholly to misunderstand his position. His Creed is in its way as full, as rich, as definite as that of other Churchmen, though it does not contain quite the same elements. The difference lies in the place which he gives it in his view of the Christian life. His position is rather that of a return to an earlier time when Creeds had not assumed the importance which they afterwards did. He does not regard uniformity of belief as essential to common worship or to Christian fellowship. He would see nothing strange in men whose dogmatic positions are widely different joining together in worship and fellowship, provided that they were one in their loyalty to Christ and their love one to another. Let a man be as definite as he likes in his own beliefs, but do not let him require that others should necessarily share them with him. The modern Churchman will always reckon orthodoxy and the acceptance of dogmatic standards as of far less account than the inner spirit of Christian discipleship, taking his stand on the words of the apostle, "If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing."

A NEW EIRENICON.

By Canon M. G. Glazebrook, D.D.

The ten distinguished representatives of several denominations, who have recently published a report entitled *Towards Christian Unity*, deserve our thanks for their zeal in a cause which is dear to the Churchmen's Union. But, just because the object is dear to us, we are bound jealously to enquire whether the method which has been adopted is likely to help its attainment.

Their report is dominated by the assumption that, if they can collect a number of propositions which they can all conscientiously affirm, these will supply a driving force in the direction of complete unity. The truth of that assumption depends upon two conditions: that the propositions are really fundamental, and that they are understood by all the signatories in the same sense.

(*a*) Let us consider the latter condition first. A laudable anxiety to appear united has led the committee to construct a number of ambiguous sentences, which can be accepted by all the parties concerned, but in quite different senses. So successful has their ingenuity proved that they do not find it necessary to mention any matters of faith "about which there still remain differences." As to "matters of order" they were less successful: for a delightfully plausible statement of agreement is followed by a confession that they must reserve all the chief points which notoriously divide their several communities. That confession excuses us from the task of examining these general propositions about order: but it also points to the need of examining the agreement as to matters of faith. Space will not allow a full treatment, but two examples will sufficiently illustrate the radical defect of the whole document.

In the paragraph marked I. (4) we read "From this doctrine of God" (derived from the Bible) "follows a certain sequence of doctrines concerning creation, human nature and destiny, sin, individual and racial, redemption . . . the Church, the last things, and Christian life and duty, individual and social; all

cohere with and follow from the doctrine of God." This imposing affirmation is no doubt sincerely made by each of the signatories. But do they all attach the same meaning to the words? Let us examine a few of the items in the sequence.

Creation. The cosmogony of Genesis, being a modified form of the primitive Semitic tradition, is clearly not derived from the "positive and highly distinctive doctrine of God" which is "the root and centre" of the Biblical revelation. What, then, is the doctrine of creation which forms the first link in the "sequence"? The committee leaves every man free to define it in his own way.

Human nature and destiny. The "Catholic" takes a hopeful view of human nature; the Calvinist holds that the majority of those who are born into the world are predestined to eternal misery; the Anglican catechism affirms that "we are by nature born in sin, and children of wrath," but that the taint of original sin is removed by baptism. The advocates of these and other views all doubtless believe that their own doctrine follows "in a certain sequence" from the doctrine of God. But none the less are their views mutually irreconcilable.

Sin. A reference to such standard books as Müller's *Die Sünde*, and Tennant's *Hulsean Lectures* will convince any student that from the age of the prophets to our own there have always been rival conceptions of the nature, the cause, and the consequences of sin. There is probably no subject upon which it is less possible to claim a consensus even among members of the same Church. Those who signed the statement that a doctrine of sin follows in certain sequence from the doctrine of God were bold enough, for they were claiming power to solve one of the greatest mysteries. But to suggest that all their attempts to read the riddle of the universe have arrived at the same answer, is to overstrain the powers of human credulity.

Redemption through . . His atoning death. Here again is a phrase which is used by all the Churches represented, and used sincerely. But the senses in which it is used are not only different, but so different as to involve different conceptions of "the nature, character, and will of God."

The Church. Each of the signatories may believe (though for my part I fail to understand how) that he can deduce the

nature of the Church from the doctrine of God. But in III. (1) they have expressedly admitted that their conclusions are quite different.

What is the total effect of these ingenious ambiguities? Are we any nearer to unity because a formula has been found so elastic that it will fit all ecclesiastical figures? Surely those who conceal differences with a plaster of words are liable to the prophet's reproach against those who "heal the wound of my people slightly," so that it will break out worse under any stress. Sophocles long ago found the right phrase for such specious "unity"—*κάλλος κακῶν ὕπουλον.*

(*b*) The other question which was suggested is: Are these propositions really fundamental? A moment's consideration will show that the whole section which we have been discussing, instead of stating "foundation truths," merely states that foundation truths of a certain kind exist, and that they may be discovered in the Bible. Now it is one thing to say, "Here is a pearl;" and quite another to say, "Here is a casket, in which, if you have the skill to distinguish, you may find a pearl." This report tells us that the Bible "contains" a progressive revelation which is "accepted as the word of God;" but does not tell us either what the revelation is, or where it is to be found, or how it is to be recognised. To describe such a statement as a "foundation truth," is to mock the reader.

It may be urged that the next paragraph in the statement—I. (5)—does really deal with fundamental truths, since it affirms the authority of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. "These Creeds, both in their statements of historical fact and in their statements of doctrine, affirm essential elements of the Christian faith." But, unfortunately, a like ambiguity reigns here. Of the eight clauses in the Apostles' creed which were regarded by the early Church as literal statements of historical fact, three have been publicly pronounced by at least one member of the committee to be not historical but symbolical. So we are left in doubt whether "the statements of historical fact" number eight or five.

The committee have opened the wrong gate, which leads only to confusion. The gate which admits to the true path of reconciliation will not yield to the *Open sesame* of any pious *double-entendre*, but only to the united force of courage, faith,

and charity. There must be courage to probe the wounds in "the mystical body of Christ;" for divisions cannot be healed until their causes are understood. There must be faith in the continuity of revelation, recognising that the Spirit of God did not cease to guide the human spirit after the fourth century. And there must be a new kind of charity, for which "agreeing to differ" is no mockery, but a bond of union.

PART I.—A STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT ON MATTERS OF FAITH.

(1) As Christians we believe that, while there is some knowledge of God to be found among all races of men and some measure of divine grace and help is present to all, a unique, progressive and redemptive revelation of Himself was given by God to the Hebrew people through the agency of inspired prophets, "in many parts and in many manners," and that this revelation reaches its culmination and completeness in One Who is more than a prophet, Who is the Incarnate Son of God, our Saviour and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) This distinctive revelation, accepted as the word of God, is the basis of the life of the Christian Church and is intended to be the formative influence upon the mind and character of the individual believer.

(3) This word of God is contained in the Old and New Testaments and constitutes the permanent spiritual value of the Bible.

(4) The root and centre of this revelation, as intellectually interpreted, consists in a positive and highly distinctive doctrine of God—His nature, character, and will. From this doctrine of God follows a certain sequence of doctrines concerning creation, human nature and destiny, sin, individual and racial, redemption through the incarnation of the Son of God and His atoning death and resurrection, the mission and operation of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity the Church, the last things, and Christian life and duty, individual and social; all these cohere with and follow from this doctrine of God.

(5) Since Christianity offers a historical revelation of God, the coherence and sequence of Christian doctrine involve a necessary synthesis of idea and fact such as is presented to us in the New Testament and in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds; and these Creeds both in their statements of historical fact and in their statements of doctrine affirm essential elements of the Christian faith, as contained in Scripture, which the Church could never abandon without abandoning its basis in the word of God.

(6) We hold that there is no contradiction between the acceptance of the miracles recited in the Creeds and the acceptance of the principle of order in nature as assumed in scientific inquiry, and we hold equally that the acceptance of miracles is not forbidden by the historical evidence candidly and impartially investigated by critical methods.

PART II.—A STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT ON MATTERS RELATING TO ORDER.

(1) That it is the purpose of our Lord that believers in Him should be, as in the beginning they were, one visible society—His body with many members—which in every age and place should maintain the communion of saints in the unity of the Spirit, and should be capable of a common witness and a common activity.

(2) That our Lord ordained, in addition to the preaching of His Gospel, the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, as not only declaratory symbols, but also effective channels of His grace and gifts for the salvation and santification of men, and that these Sacraments being essentially social ordinances were intended to affirm the obligation of corporate fellowship as well as individual confession of Him.

(3) That our Lord, in addition to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in a variety of gifts and graces upon the whole Church, also conferred upon it by the self-same Spirit a Ministry of manifold gifts and functions, to maintain the unity and continuity of its witness and work.

PART III.—A STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCES IN RELATION TO MATTERS OF ORDER.

(1) As regards the nature of this visible Society, how far it involves uniformity or allows variety in polity, creed, and worship.

(2) As regards the Sacraments—the conditions, objective and subjective, in their ministration and reception on which their validity depends.

(3) As regards the Ministry—whether it derives its authority through an episcopal or a presbyteral succession or through the community of believers or by a combination of these.

Signed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells (chairman), the Bishops of Winchester and Oxford, Dr. W. T. Davison, Principal A. E. Garvie, Dr. J. Scott Lidgett, the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, the Rev. C. Anderson Scott, Dr. Eugene Stock, and the Rev. Tissington Tatlow (hon. secretary).

TRUTHFULNESS IN RELIGION.*

By the Rev. E. C. Dewick, M.A., Vice-Principal of St. Aidan's Theological College.

"Buy the Truth, and sell it not."—*Prov.* xxiii. 23.

Truthfulness is one of those qualities which are absolutely indispensable in the character of all who would become leaders of men. And by "truthfulness" we mean, not only a scrupulous accuracy of statement, but a complete honesty of purpose, an absence of the intention to deceive, whether by word, or action, or by the silence which is sometimes as eloquent as any speech. It is true that a dishonest man may for a time acquire a great influence over his fellows; but this influence lasts only so long as he is able to impose upon them. Whenever the mask of deception is torn away, his power vanishes with it. Men will follow strange leaders sometimes—hard taskmasters, wild fanatics, misguided enthusiasts; but rarely, if ever, will they yield themselves to follow one whom they know to be insincere.

Now the life-work of the Christian minister is (or ought to be) a work of leadership. Unless the clergy can, in some measure, guide and inspire the lives of others, their office will be of little value.

And yet I imagine that we are all conscious that the clerical office in England to-day is not wholly free from the suspicion of insincerity. You will not, of course, find much reference to that suspicion in the pages of the "Church Press;" nor are the clergy (nor even theological students) perhaps the most likely persons to hear open expressions of it in their presence. But in the pages of the less orthodox theological journals it is (as many of you know) a constant theme for discussion; and those of you who have mixed freely with men of various types have doubtless heard evidences of it often enough.

Men are quite ready to grant that the clergy of to-day are, on the whole, men of energy and self-sacrifice and kindliness;

* A Sermon preached in St. Aidan's College Chapel, Birkenhead.

but they would hesitate to add to the list of clerical virtues a passion for truth at all costs, or a readiness to face the deeper problems of life with entire honesty and sincerity of purpose.

Have you ever noticed, for instance, the following contrast? If a notable man of science makes a pronouncement with regard to some religious question, the general public are anxious to hear what he has to say. He may be but an amateur in theology, but he is believed to be at least an honest seeker after truth. If, on the other hand, a leader of religion (who does not happen to be also a qualified scientist) ventures to comment upon some problem of science, he is dismissed with an amused contempt, and told not to meddle in matters outside his own province. And why? because it is assumed that he has a theological axe to grind, and is not simply anxious to find the truth for its own sake.

I am not contending that the assumption is always correct, but merely that it exists. And if it exists, it is surely well that we should look it fairly in the face, and not shirk its consideration as an unpleasant topic. For if it is a mistaken impression, it can only be refuted by those who have taken the trouble to think out the causes which have produced it, and who realise what measure of truth (if any) it contains.

Now the suspicion of clerical insincerity seems to me to be bound up, in part, with certain features of clerical life which cannot be, and indeed ought not to be, entirely removed. One such feature is this; that the priest—like the lawyer, and (to a lesser degree) the statesman—deals with *truth expressed in fixed forms*. In the case of the lawyer, these forms are the laws of the land; in the case of the statesman, the traditions of his party and the constitution of his country; in the case of the priest, Bible and Creeds and Articles.

Now fixed forms for the expression of truth are inevitable and invaluable. They guide and check the extravagances of individuals; they form a firm backbone within the life of the society or nation.

But at the same time fixed forms have this disadvantage: they do not grow along with the growth of human thought and life. Thought moves on; they remain unchanged; or at least, if they are changed, it is not till long after the change in men's thoughts. You cannot legislate (we are often reminded) in advance of public opinion; human life and thought must change first, and then, later on—sometimes much later on—the laws are adapted to the changed conditions.

Now it follows that those who have to deal with the outward forms and expressions of truth are often confronted with the claims of a double loyalty;—an "immediate loyalty" to the fixed forms, to which they have in many cases solemnly pledged themselves; and a "wider loyalty" to all that is true and noble—including perhaps truths which they have only lately come to realise, and which do not seem to be fully covered by the ancient formulae.

So it is with the lawyer; he owes an "immediate loyalty" to the law of the land, which he has sworn to administer; so too the statesman owes an "immediate loyalty" to the constitution of which he is a member; but they both owe also a "wider loyalty" to the welfare of their country. And there are times when the letter of the law does not seem wholly fitted to serve the common weal, or when an ancient constitution proves inadequate for the needs of a growing Empire.

Then arises the problem of a double loyalty; and then comes the critic's opportunity to bring his charge of insincerity. If the "nearer loyalty" is faithfully maintained, we hear scornful charges of blindness and obscurantism; if the "wider loyalty" is felt to be more compelling, and the new truths are welcomed, we are asked, with indignation, What of your solemn vows and pledges?

I need not point out how acutely this problem confronts the clergy. More than others, we are solemnly pledged to certain fixed expressions of religious belief; more than others, we ought to be men of vision, ready to hear and answer the Spirit who guides into all truth.

On the whole, the tendency of the clerical mind always seems to be to concentrate attention on the "nearer loyalty"—the faithful adherence to ancient forms of belief and practice; and sometimes the claim of the wider loyalty to *truth* at all times and at all costs seems to be almost forgotten.

And here, it seems to me, we come to the root of the charge of insincerity which is brought against the clergy. Men believe that the bigger problems of life are not really approached with a fair mind by the leaders of religion, that they pre-judge the case without ever really troubling to weigh the evidence. Instead of asking: Is this true? they ask, Is it orthodox? Facts must be made to fit into the clerical standard of orthodoxy, and if not, so much the worse for the facts; they can at least receive no ecclesiastical recognition.

Is this an unfair charge? I fear not entirely, and I would appeal in confirmation of this to the story of the long conflict between Church and Science. You know how every important advance in scientific knowledge has been met by the Church with suspicion and opposition. The cry has been raised that "the Faith is in danger!" and pulpit and press have rung with ecclesiastical denunciations, fierce in language, futile in effect. For the judgment of the Church upon the progress of science has again and again been reversed by the verdict of history.

Let us take a few instances. From the 4th to the 15th century, the Church strove to suppress the novel theory that the earth is spherical and not flat; and Columbus, when he was planning to sail round the world, was confronted with a long array of proof-texts from the Fathers to prove the impiety of such an attempt.[1] Or again, when some bold astronomers in the 16th century dared to suggest that the earth is not the centre of the Universe, all Christendom was scandalised; and Martin Luther and the Papal authorities agreed, for once, that the new theory was unscriptural and profane.[2]

So also in more recent times. The triumphs of science in the 19th century were contested, inch by inch, by the leaders

[1] Bonney, *Present Relations of Religion and Science*, p. 185. [2] Bonney, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

of the Church, and contested in vain. And why? Not because the clergy were insincere, in the sense that they consciously attacked what they believed to be true. No; they were perfectly honest in their fear and dislike of the new theories. But they were insincere in this; that they could not or would not face the facts fairly and impartially; they first decided that they were not going to believe in the new theories, and then searched for reasons why they should disbelieve them.

You may remember the historic scene at the British Association Meeting in Oxford in 1860, when Wilberforce and Huxley crossed swords over the Theory of Eevolution; how the famous prelate tried to "score a point" by a clever thrust which won him thunders of applause, and then the hot anger of the man of science broke out in crushing retort:—

> "The Right Rev. Prelate thinks it discreditable to be descended from an ape. I will tell him what is much more discreditable, and that is, to prostitute great gifts of eloquence in order to discredit a theory which he has never fairly examined!" *

Whatever the merits of that particular controversy, Huxley laid his finger on a really weak spot in the clerical character—the timid refusal to face new Truth, the readiness to condemn without fair trial, the use of questionable methods—misrepresentation and exaggeration—in order to try and secure a victory. Such methods "sell the truth."

I know that there are reasons—excuses, if you will—for this. As clergymen, we know that we are stewards of a great treasure, even the Gospel of the Grace of God, which has changed our lives, and can change the lives of others. And since this treasure is contained (in part) in the earthen vessels of human words and acts, we cannot but be cautious in approaching anything which seems to threaten even the earthen vessels. The treasure is so great, the issues at stake are so vital, that we dare not gamble with new speculations, as men might gamble who have little to lose. For this reason, and also because of our pledged loyalty to the traditional forms which

* The exact words which Huxley used are variously reported; see L. Huxley's *Life of T. H. Huxley*, Vol. I., pp. 179-187.

we have inherited, it is perhaps unlikely that the clergy should ever be pioneers of new thought.

But if in the future, with its new and tremendous opportunities, we are to be men of influence and of leadership, we shall need to shew that, whatever may be true of the past, the clergy of to-day are not afraid of the truth.

Too often we have tried to shelter the Gospel with our formularies as if it were a hot-house plant; we have not really trusted it, nor allowed it to stand out in its simple grandeur as the message of the Love of God. Yet surely we need not be so afraid for the Gospel? Has it not amply proved its own strength? In spite of the repeated failure of the Church's methods of defence, the Church's message remains a living power, unconquered and unconquerable.

And if we may (as indeed we must) admit that the leaders of religion have been often blind to newly-discovered truths, surely we are entitled to point out that sometimes the leaders of science have been inclined to shut their eyes to the old, but never antiquated, truths of our spiritual nature—those facts of religious experience which are no less real because they are not all explained by the known laws of physical science. The things of the spirit—Divine love, Divine communion, Divine peace, cannot be analyzed or codified; but neither can they without grievous loss be ignored.

These are the truths which we, as priests, have specially to guard and proclaim. But let us remember that there can never be any real conflict between these and the other facts of life. If we are called to preach the Gospel of Love, let us bear in mind St. Paul's words: "Love rejoiceth with the Truth."

Sometimes men such as Huxley seem to us strangely blind to spiritual things. But I would to God that we "religious people" could catch that splendid enthusiasm for truth which inspired Huxley's life-work. Do you know those brave and yet pathetic words which he wrote to Charles Kingsley in the midst of a bereavement, which for him was not lightened by the rays of Christian hope:—

> "I could have fancied a devil asking me what profit it was to have stripped myself of the hopes and consolations of the mass of mankind. To which my only reply was and is: O devil, truth is better than much profit. . . . If wife and child, and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other as the penalty, still I will not lie."

Mistaken—yes, no Christian can doubt that Huxley was mistaken; yet behind his unfaith in dogmas lay a mighty faith in truth—a faith which puts many of us to shame.

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the Creeds."

. . . . . .

How can we best express the true Christian attitude towards this perplexing problem of old traditions and new discoveries? It seems to me that we may find the answer in the great precept of our Lord: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, . . ."

"Be converted." For if once our life has been touched and turned by a power that we know is not our own; if we have felt the hand of a Father in heaven guiding our life; then we have reached a bed-rock of faith, and we can face life's problems truthfully, humbly, and bravely. We can go out into the unknown, knowing that we are the inheritors of all that is good and beautiful and true; for these things are our Father's, and so in a measure they are ours too.

". . . And become as little children." For sometimes the converted man seems to forget that he is but a little child, and speaks as though he knew all about his Father in Heaven. Nay; let us remember that we all are but little children in our knowledge of God. Yet even a child's knowledge is capable of wondrous growth under a father's care; and if we come to our Father day by day in prayer and worship and sacrament, we may be confident that many a dark problem will become clearer as He explains it to us, and many an unexplored land will become familiar ground, as He shews us the way.

REVIEW.

MR. BALFOUR'S "THEISM AND HUMANISM."

(Continued from the March number.)

In the last number of the *Modern Churchman* I examined Mr. Balfour's attempt to show the necessity of Theism to account for and to justify our æsthetic and ethical beliefs. The same line of thought is then applied to the intellectual region—the region of scientific beliefs. Mr. Balfour argues that all physical Science rests upon certain "inevitable beliefs" which, nevertheless, cannot be rationally demonstrated. In the first place, it rests upon the assumption that there is such a thing as matter. And yet we are not in direct and immediate contact with matter as understood by the modern Physicist. Here Mr. Balfour is able to appeal, not merely to the old Berkleyan line of thought—the contention that what we immediately perceive is not "atoms" but "ideas" which are unintelligible apart from consciousness, but to the recent scientific theories which have so vastly widened the gulf between "matter" as it is understood by the plain man and matter as it is understood by the Physicist. Nobody has seen or touched an "electron" or an "atom." No uneducated man has ever suspected its existence. Such entities are inferred, not perceived. And yet, according to Mr. Balfour, we are forced by an imperious necessity to make the inference that such things have a real, objective existence.

Now here again Mr. Balfour exaggerates, as it seems to me, the difference between his point of view and that of all non-empiricist philosophies. It is true that these philosophies try to answer many questions which Mr. Balfour does not explicitly raise. It is never made quite clear in what sense Mr. Balfour considers the real existence of material atoms, electrons, or what not, to be a postulate both of the common-sense and of the scientific view of the world. He tells us that "whatever be the proper way of describing scientific results, the experimental data on which they rest are sought and obtained in the spirit of "naif realism." On this foundation science proceeds to build a theory of nature by which the foundation itself is shattered. It saws off the branch on which it is supported. It kicks down the ladder by which it has climbed. It dissolves the thing perceived into a remote reality which is neither perceived nor perceivable" (p. 165-6). Now, if what Mr. Balfour is attacking here is the "empirical philosophy" (often, more or less explicitly, assumed by men of science) which professes to account for all our beliefs by "experience," and by experience practically understands "sensation," the argument is good. It is equally valid, or still more valid, against the Materialism which imagines that, in accounting for thought, feeling, emotion, &c., as the bye-product of material processes it is making no assumption, and not advancing beyond the things which are certainly and immediately known to us. But if "Science" confines itself to its own province, frankly admitting that it has to rely (like the "plain" man and the philosopher) upon the validity of laws and categories of thought of which it can give no further account, it may be doubted whether it can be said to be destroying its own assumptions by postulating the existence of the material entities which it is bound to infer—in the only

sense in which it is bound to assume their existence. Science is not, I venture to assume, committed to the interpretation of matter propounded by "naif Realism." Undoubtedly "things" cannot be resolved into the "bundles of ideas" into which Berkeley attempted to resolve them; but if we admit the "category of substance," I should venture to contend that the man of science has all that he wants, even if it is denied that the "matter" which he infers can have any existence independently of a Mind which experiences it. This point of view seems curiously ignored by Mr. Balfour when he admits that philosophers, when faced with the difficulty about an "external world," "can, and often do, lighten their philosophic ship by pitching the whole material universe overboard, as a bit of superfluous cargo. But physical science (at least in my opinion) cannot do anything of the kind. Its whole business is with the material universe. Its premisses are experiences of external things, not of internal sensations and ideas" (p. 169). Certainly it cannot be content with "internal ideas" in Berkeley's sense; but if it is admitted that we know things, I see no reason why the man of science should not be content with the "things" admitted to exist by the "objective Idealist," without insisting upon interpreting them in the sense of the materialist or even of the realist. Mr. Balfour is right in arguing that the man of science makes assumptions which are often inconsistent with the "empirical" philosophy which he professes to assume, but, in conceding that he is entitled to his implied belief in the "real things" which he naively assumes, Mr. Balfour is, as it seems to me, throwing away the strongest line of argument which the defender of Theism possesses. Doubtless, the materialistic man of science cannot get on without "real things," but it is his materialistic metaphysic and not his science that wants the "real things." Mr. Balfour, if I may say so, does not seem able to do justice to the position of any idealism less "subjective" and sensationalistic than that of Berkeley.

Mr. Balfour's attitude towards this question seems to me to be unsatisfactory just because he will not push his enquiries a little further—just that little step further which, if he took it, would convince himself and others that at bottom he too is a "metaphysician," though it may be of a type not easily identifiable with any of the traditional schools. He treats belief in an external world as "a postulate which science is compelled to use but is unable to demonstrate." How, then, are we to class it? It is not a law of thought in the accepted meaning of that expression. We are not rationally required to accept it by the very structure of our thinking faculties. Many people, indeed, theoretically reject it; none, so far as I know, regard it as self-evident. . . . Described in technical language, it would seem to be *a priori* without being necessary, and synthetic without being empirical—qualities which, in combination, scarcely fit into any familiar classification." (p. 173). Now here Mr. Balfour seems to ignore the possibility of two alternative positions. He ignores the contention of men like Reid—recently revived with no improvement by "new Realists" like Mr. Prichard—that we do immediately perceive actual, independently existing "matter," and that therefore the belief is inevitable just in the same sense as the belief that I am now hot, now cold. Against this position we could no doubt urge with immense effectiveness the contrast between "matter" as conceived of by

Science and the "matter" of the plain man. Matter, as the "plain man" thinks of it is solid and continuous; matter, as the man of Science infers it to be, is discontinuous or full of holes. If the plain man is right, the philosopher who makes the plain man the final judge as to the nature of reality is at war with Science; if Science is right, we can no longer contend for an immediate perception of what the "naif Realist" understands by matter. On the other hand, the objective Idealist does contend that the existence of matter *in his sense* is necessary—in the sense that it is a belief "which we are rationally required to accept by the very structure of our thinking faculties." This is just what Kant and Hegel mean by calling substance a "category." What is the difference between this and calling it an "inevitable belief"? That the existence of "matter" in the sense of the "objective Idealist" is inevitable I concede; if Mr. Balfour contends that more than this is required, he is speaking not as a man of Science, but as a metaphysician—a Realist not of the school of Kant, but more nearly of the school of Locke. Any arguments which Mr. Balfour could use in defence of that position would be "metaphysical" arguments; and of the difficulties of that Lockian position nobody of course is better aware than Mr. Balfour himself. That the man of Science is bound to assume "matter," I do not doubt, but what the Idealist denies is the possibility of assuming the *independent* existence of matter—the existence of matter without a Mind that thinks it.

Mr. Balfour then goes on to another kind of "inevitable belief" implied in Science, and that is the "inevitable belief" which lies at the basis of Induction, and upon which depends all formulation of Natural Law and all scientific prediction. And here he introduces a discussion upon Probability, which constitutes one of the most original and interesting parts of the book. Mr. Balfour seems to me perfectly right in insisting that the uniformity of Nature—in the sense in which such uniformity is a postulate of Physical Science—is not a necessity of thought. (Mr. Balfour—unfortunately as it seems to me—identifies this uniformity with "the law of Causation," which, I should contend, is a different thing altogether, but that question need not be gone into for the moment). He wants to treat this assumption as an inevitable belief "which possesses the highest degree of this intuitive probability"—a kind of probability which he attempts to distinguish sharply from the "calculative probability" of the mathematician. That the practical certainty which is attainable by Physical Science is after all a high degree of probability I should heartily admit, but I doubt the necessity of treating it as a quite distinct kind of probability from the "calculative probability." Mr. Bertrand Russell has formulated the principle upon which inductive inference is based as follows:—"The greater the number of cases in which things of the sort A have been found associated with things of the sort B, the more probable it is (if no cases of failure of association are known) that A is always associated with B."[1]

As far as it goes, Mr. Russell's treatment of the matter seems to me excellent, and one that would fit in very well with Mr. Balfour's conception

[1] *The Problem of Philosophy* (p. 104). I think it would be an improvement to speak not of things "being associated" with things, but of an event being followed by another event.

of intuitive probability. But neither Mr. Balfour nor Mr. Bertrand Russell has, as it seems to me, quite got to the bottom of the matter. This principle of probability is not an ultimate truth. We do not, as is assumed by the Kantians, presuppose the uniformity of Nature in all our inferences from experience. The modern man of Science does that, but then he relies (as Mill rightly contended) upon an enormous induction from experience, and that induction had to be made without the aid of such a presupposition. The induction by mere enumeration is not "scientific induction," but it is one which does intuitively strike us as probable. But in inferring the universal uniformity of Nature from the observed uniformity, we do assume the law of Causation—the principle that every change must have a cause, though such a cause need by no means necessarily work in the mechanically uniform way presupposed by strictly physical (though not by biological) Science. We know then that for whatever happens there must be a cause: and all our experience leads us to believe that it is a cause which works uniformly. We have an enormously more powerful reason for believing that —at least in the purely physical sphere (I will put aside for the moment the difficult questions connected with biological and psychological "law")—the cause is one which works uniformly than for the contrary belief, for which, indeed, it can hardly be said that we have, in the present state of Science, any reason at all. The judgment that, given such and such a number of instances of uniformity (and none at all to the contrary), there is such and such a probability in favour of uniformity in the hitherto experienced cases is a judgement of exactly the same kind as all probable judgements. I do not know of any reason why, if possible, the number of experienced cases of uniformity were known, the degree of this probability should not be expressed mathematically. Like all such judgements, it rests upon the extent of our knowledge of the Cause: if we knew the ultimate Cause perfectly, we should have perfect prevision of the effects; with imperfect knowledge, we have a probability varying with the relation of the amount of knowledge to the extent of our ignorance. The principles upon which such judgements rest is, as it seems to me, a strictly "necessary" axiom or law of thought. The law is a certainty, though the judgements which it prescribes are only probable. Kant was right in making "probability" a category of the understanding, though he did not throw much light upon the way in which it works. Mr. Balfour has, as it seems to me, done an immense service in calling attention to the principle of "intuitive probability," though (as it seems to me) he unnecessarily differentiates it from "calculative probability." He does call his principle "intuitive:" nothing but his aversion for language which to him savours of Dogmatism prevents his calling it a "law of thought"; and then he would not differ from other metaphysicians, though too many of them have ignored this particular principle, and have confounded the strictly necessary law of causality with the quite empirical law of uniformity.

But here I must take notice of a lecture in which Mr. Balfour seems almost to have anticipated such a line of criticism as the one which I have adopted. He tries to differentiate these "inevitable beliefs from the intuitions" or categories of the Logicians and the Metaphysicians. "Probability,"

he urges, "is evidently a matter of degree." A belief may be more probable or less probable. Inevitableness, on the other hand, seems at first sight to be insusceptible of gradation. It is, or it is not. Yet this extreme definiteness vanishes if we regard it as a limiting term—as the last term of a series whose earlier members represent various degrees of plausibility. On this view we should regard our beliefs about the universe as moulded by formative forces, which vary from irresistible coercion to faint and doubtful inclination. . . . I am well aware that a doctrine like this will find few admirers among systematic thinkers. Inevitable beliefs, which are fundamental without being axiomatic; which lack definiteness and precision; which do not seem to be equally applicable to every field of experience; which do not claim to be of the essence of our understanding like the categories of the critical philosophy, or the so-called laws of thought, have little to recommend them to philosophers. And when inevitableness is treated as merely an extreme form of plausibility; when guidance is discovered in tendencies which are weak and of uncertain application, leading to error as well as to truth; these objections will scarcely be mitigated" (pp. 218, 219). And then Mr. Balfour proceeds to give illustrations—cases of "anticipations of nature," which do not seem in the first instance to have been suggested by experience, but which have been clung to by men of science in spite of much apparent experimental refutation, and which, in some cases, have turned out to be false. He shows, for instance, how the idea of the "conservation of energy can only be brought into harmony with experience by a conception of "potential energy" which cannot be said to rest upon any experienced matter of fact, and ends by suggesting that the "indestructibility of matter" (*i.e.*, quantity of matter) which has seemed to men like Kant and Spencer to be self-evident, is at least in danger of being disestablished by recent discoveries or speculations. "Mass (it seems) is no longer to be regarded as unchanging;" and yet something remains to satisfy the demand for "conservation," *i.e.*, "electric charge." And yet, in spite of such refutations, Mr. Balfour holds that it is only by following the guidance of these beliefs which, for the time being, present themselves as inevitable, that scientific progress is effected.

I cannot follow Mr. Balfour into his survey of the course of scientific investigation. But I will venture to point out that there is no real difficulty in recognizing that there are degrees of self-evidence, and in reconciling this admission with the contention that Mr. Balfour's "inevitable beliefs" are merely the old categories and laws of thought disguised under an alias. Of course, from the point of view of Omniscience all self-evident truths must be equally self-evident. But for imperfect minds the degrees of insight into such truths may be infinitely various. The proposition that there do exist such truths which reason recognizes as self-evident, is not refuted by the fact that both men of science and philosophers have taken as self-evident truths and propositions which further reflection has shown not to be so, any more than it is refuted by Mill's pretended capacity for conceiving that, in the region of the fixed stars, $2 + 2$ may possibly $= 5$. Nor is it refuted because, even to those who believe in them, not all these truths appear equally self-evident. Not all self-evident truths are so simple, are apprehended with so

little reflection as the proposition that $2 + 2 = 4$. Many of the cases adduced by Mr. Balfour in which an "anticipation of nature" seems to have run ahead of the evidence, even when it has subsequently turned out to be true, are, I should contend, merely cases of hypothesis, suggested by an incomplete experience which have, nevertheless, appealed to men of science because they seemed to explain so much if they were true; but, in other cases, the man of science was under the influence of some real axiom, misunderstood or too narrowly interpreted. Sometimes, for instance, when men of science or philosophers have persisted in believing that the "uniformity of nature" is a self-evident truth, it is because they have confused it with the really axiomatic truth that every event must have a cause, though the cause need not at all necessarily be found in a mechanical sequence of phenomena. I see no reason for supposing, as Mr. Balfour apparently does, that in this advance of Science through non-rational tendencies of thought which have actually guided men to truth, even when they have turned out not to be wholly true in themselves, we can detect evidences of "design"—that "we seem forced to assume something in the nature of a directing influence, and (as I should add, though perhaps M. Bergson would not) of supra-mundane design. And if "a Power that makes for truth" be required to justify our scientific faith, we must surely count ourselves as theists" (p. 241). Or if I admitted that such instinctive beliefs were due to such a design, it would only be on the basis of a Theism, or, at least, a belief in the rationality of the universe already arrived at on other grounds.

So far as Mr. Balfour is trying to support Theism by proving the necessity of certain non-rational assumptions to justify our confidence in Science, I must needs think his attempt fails. For so far as these tendencies of thought are really necessary to Science, they do not seem to me non-rational. Mr. Balfour is, as it seems to me, too much under the influence of the prejudice that reasonable belief must necessarily mean a system of clear-cut dogmas, all of which are themselves self-evident truths of absolute clearness, simplicity and certitude, or else propositions that may be deduced from such truths by way of strict deductive reasoning. I quite admit that the procedure of many philosophers whom he has in mind, is calculated to encourage this misunderstanding. I will not say that he actually confuses reason with deductive reasoning; Mr. Balfour, of course, is too well acquainted with the history of thought to make that mistake, though it is frequently made in quarters in which one might have supposed it impossible. But he fails to recognise the possibility of implications which become evident on reflection without being exactly axioms or strictly deductive inferences. There are many who could hardly be denied a place among the systematic philosophers who would fully admit that an ultimate theory of the universe must be reached by the method of asking what view of it seems to be implied or presupposed in all our knowledge—including the "inevitable beliefs" which that knowledge implies. They will admit that not all the steps of the argument, or the parts of the system, are equally clear, equally certain deliverances of reason; they will admit that no system involves no difficulties, that sometimes one theory of the universe has to be preferred to another which cannot be absolutely refuted, because it involves fewer

difficulties; and that much of our Weltanschauung must rest upon analogy, probable reasoning, inference which falls short of logical certainty. They would certainly acquiesce in Mr. Balfour's contention that "our beliefs must be provisional, because, till we approach complete knowledge, all beliefs are provisional" (p. 266). By way of illustration, I may remind the reader that such men as Lotze, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and Prof. James Ward, may be included among systematic philosophers as well as Kant and the Hegelians and the dogmatists of Empiricism. That philosophers would do well to be less ambitious and more modest in their system-making, may be freely admitted; and this is one of the lessons which they might well learn from the study of this and other works of Mr. Balfour.

At bottom I agree with Mr. Balfour's fundamental contention that Theism is the only view of the Universe which fully justifies the beliefs required by Morality, by Science, and by the knowledge of common life. Only I do not think that these can be got at quite so easily as Mr. Balfour imagines. I do not think that he succeeds in showing that Theism is a necessary assumption because all Science rests on beliefs which are irrational. His argument that these beliefs cannot be adequately accounted for on materialistic and naturalistic assumptions is worth much; but to proceed from this negation to Theism involves, as it seems to me, the facing of some questions which Mr. Balfour refuses to face. His jump from "Naturalism is not the whole truth" to "Theism is true" is too sudden and precipitate. Granted that the argument is at bottom good, there are links in it which may be implied in Mr. Balfour's mind and in the mind of the plain man for whom he is providing what he looks upon as a substitute for Philosophy; but if the missing links were filled in, Mr. Balfour's thoughts would become just what he pretends it is not—a "system." If Mr. Balfour were to attempt to fill up these missing links, if, for instance, he were to show more fully than he does that there is no half-way house between the "Naturalism," whose insufficiency he so amply demonstrates, and a fully developed Theism, the result might be still more valuable than the present work. Of the ingenuity, the brilliancy, and the lucidity with which Mr. Balfour's arguments are developed, it is needless to speak; the book is none the less a contribution to Philosophy because Mr. Balfour would, apparently, like it to be taken for something else.

H. RASHDALL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MORE CHURCH TEACHING IN CHURCH SCHOOLS.

SIR, *To the Editor of* THE MODERN CHURCHMAN.

You may be interested in a further instance of what occurred at a Diocesan Inspection.

Inspector: "What parables have you learnt about things that were lost?"
Children: "The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Son."
Inspector: "Why did our Lord give three parables?"
Children: "So that the people would not forget."
Inspector: "Oh no! That's not the reason. Because there are Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity. One parable is about God the Father, one about God the Son, and one about God the Holy Ghost. Which is about God the Father?"

Children: "The Prodigal Son."
Inspector: "Yes: which is about God the Son?
Children: "The Lost Sheep."
Inspector: "Yes, quite right. Now which is about God the Holy Ghost?"
Children: "The Lost Coin."
Inspector: "How is it about God the Holy Ghost?" (No answer). "What did the woman do when she lost the coin?"
Children: "She swept the house."
Inspector: "What did she do before that?"
Children: "She lit a candle."
Inspector: "Yes. Now the house is the Church, and the candle is God the Holy Ghost."

I wondered what the broom was, and whether there might not be need for it to-day.

ANOTHER OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.

SIR, "THROUGH THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST."

I venture to think that the expression which gives the title to Mr. Fairlie Clarke's letter, and the cognate expression "for Christ's sake" are among those in our Prayer Book which most loudly call for revision.

In pleading for this an *argumentum ad hominem* addressed to the members of the school which second in point of numbers in the Church of England, and first, I think, in the Church of Ireland, may be found in the fact on which Mr. Clarke dwells that the expression "for Christ's sake," in the connexion referred to, is an unscriptural innovation. Indeed it is even more than this, being in direct contradiction to the teaching of S. John iii. 16.

On the other hand an *argumentum ad hominem*, addressed to the most numerous school in the Church of England, may be grounded on the fact that neither of these expressions is to be found in any of the prayers in ancient liturgies that have been transferred to our own. The following is a list of the prayers in which these expressions occur with either the sources from which they are derived, or the dates of their composition.

"Satisfaction."—Collect for 2nd Sunday in Advent. *Greg. Sacr.*
"Merits."—Collect for Whit Sunday. *Greg. Sacr.*
"Merits."—Collects for 12th and 13th Sunday after Trinity (11th and 12th after Pent. in *Roman Missal*). *Leon. Sacr.*
"Sake."—Collect for 24th Sunday after Trinity. *Greg. Sacr.*

In the case of all these the *per Christum* of the original has been altered. I once asked a Roman Bishop if in the Roman Church a prayer ever ended with *propter Christum*, and his reply was: "Never, always with *per Christum*."

The remaining prayers in which the expression in question occurs are the following:—

"Sake."—Quinquagesima, 1549.
"Merits."—Easter Eve, 1661.
"Merits."—1st after Easter, 1549.
"Merits."—S. Luke's Day, 1549.
"Sake."—The General Confession, 1552.
"Sake."—Church Militant, 1552.
"Sake."—General Confession in Communion Office, 1548.
"Merits and Mediation."—All sorts and conditions. Bp. Saunderson or Bp. Gunning, 1662.

The above sources and dates are taken from Procter on the Prayer Book.

The prayer for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland contains the expression "for Christ's sake;" but I suppose no one will claim it as an ancient prayer.

It will thus be seen that all prayers in our Liturgy in which the expressions in question occur, are either post-Reformation prayers or ancient prayers whose ending has been altered.

While appeals for answer to prayer "for the merits" of anyone are not found in the Roman Missal in the Collects for any of the Festivals of Apostles or Evangelists, or the B.V.M., or St. John the Baptist, they occur in the Collects for the Festivals of a very large number of later Saints—St. Patrick, St. Scholastica, &c., &c., &c. This fact would seem to point to a medieval origin of the expression.

Can the laudable desire to give back to the Lord Jesus Christ the honour which they felt the Roman Church had taken from Him to give to the Saints have led the Reformers to introduce these strange expressions into our Prayer Book?

It is one of the ironies of the History of Dogma that the School in the Church which claims to be so specially Protestant, should regard as its fundamental tenet the mediaeval doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, either in the form of Anselm's *Satisfactio vicaria activa*, or, more frequently, in the more objectionable form of the *Satisfactio vicaria passiva* of Innocent III., the first promulgator of Transubstantiation and the great persecutor of the Protestants of his day, the Albigenses.

H. S. VERSCHOYLE.

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SIR,

THE MOST VITAL NEED.

In your admirable article on *The Vital Need* (March, 1916, p. 585), one thing does not appear to be emphasized, and that, to the writer's thinking, is the most important: namely, the elimination of *errors* and the substitution of the *truth* in the Church's Doctrines. It will be the hardest thing to do! In what does the "High" Church differ from the "Low"? or both from Roman Catholicism? and in what are all three, as well as Nonconformists, "at one"? They *all* agree that the Christ-like character is the best to have, and all make self-sacrifices for poor, sick, wounded and others; but, when doctrines are the question, they are at daggers drawn!

External ritual, customary forms, are nothing in the eyes of the Master, who tells us that each will be judged by his *Conduct.* (Mt. xxv. 31f.)

The root of the matter lies in disagreements of beliefs or dogmas; and these have mainly arisen out of *misinterpretations* of the original Greek New Testament.

Unfortunately, the Church did not go to the Greek whereby to express its doctries, but to the Latin Vulgate, upon which they are nearly all based, and so passed over into the Protestant Reformation. Yet the Latin is often a very unsatisfactory rendering of the original Greek.

For example, we are all familiar with the English equivalents of the Latin words *expiatio, redemptio, salvatio, remissio, confessio, justificatio, conversio,* etc. The Roman Catholic Church has added others, as *purgatorium,*

transubstantiatio, while *credo*, to "believe," is a mistranslation of the Greek word, "to have faith."

English words have also changed their meanings. In 1884 I called attention to the erroneous meaning of "atonement," usually interpreted as "making amends for." This was *not* the original meaning in the sixteenth century, nor when our Bible (A.V.) was issued (1611). It, at that time, always meant "reconciliation" or "At-one-ment," as in its use by Shakespeare. Hence arose from the mistake (apparently traceable to Calvin) the erroneous doctrine of "Substitution."

Again, much error has arisen from taking *metaphorical* expressions as if they were *concrete*. Thus the word "Redemption" (from the Vulgate) means in Latin, "to buy back." The Greek word is "to buy in the market place," obviously a metaphor (Christ buys us out of our slavery to sin), but the early Church taking the meaning literally, speculated as to whom the "price" was paid. As man was regarded as having fallen a prey to the devil, Christ died in order, by so doing, to pay him the price necessary to recover man. In later centuries that idea having been abandoned, God was substituted for the devil; and Christ was supposed to have paid the penalty due by man, and so to have appeased the wrath of God and satisfied His justice.

What then *is* "Salvation"? Not *safety*, this was its meaning in the Old Testament; but *soundness*, *i.e.*, the *Christian Character*. This is the only thing that "saves" a man; because it is *Salvation from Sin;* not from the punishment of an imaginary hell-fire.

I would maintain, therefore, that at this time, the *most vital need* is the purification of Church doctrines since false creeds are the source of much bitterness and much anti-Christian feeling. For when the doctrines of theology are resolved into their true Biblical meanings, they all become aspects of the holy life, which every Christian is bound to live; that life being based on the true spirit of Love—or, *Agapé*—as St. Paul shows in his "Psalm of Love." (I. Cor. xiii.).

All Christians accept *Agapé* as the common basis of Christianity. Let us try to restore the Church's unchristian doctrines to their true meanings. If we can do this the "Reconciliation" of the separated Christian bodies will be complete and the Church herself unified.

The second article, entitled *A National Mission*, by the Rev. A. J. Humphreys, illustrates what I mean. He questions the advisability of the general title of the Mission being "The National Mission of Repentance and Hope."

Mr. Humphreys suggests as a different title:—"A Call to a New Life." I would propose:—"A Call to the Christ-life"; or, if not too long:—"A Revival of Truth and a Call to the Christ-life of Love."

Bournemouth. GEORGE HENSLOW.

P.S.—To show the difficulties of uprooting old beliefs, after I had explained (in 1884) how "atonement" really meant at-one-ment, and had no such meaning as "atoning" in the modern sense, a clergyman, for whom I had preached, told a friend that I should never do it again in *his* Church. I heard a Canon say in his sermon:—"If I ceased to believe in 'Substitution,' I would never preach in this church

again." A clergyman remarking on my article in a Magazine observed:—"He may be right, but I am too old to change, and I represent a large body of clergy."

IS THE BIBLE THEOCENTRIC?

SIR,

I thank you for admitting my letter on "The Incarnation and the Virgin Birth," which I wrote in the spirit of your article in the same number, feeling deeply "The Vital Need" of "Reform in the Church's doctrinal formularies leading to their immense simplification and modernisation." May I be allowed to reply to the question you put as a comment on my letter?—"If the Bible be theocentric, does it matter very much if it is geocentric?"

If by the Bible being theocentric is meant that the teaching of the Bible is that God is central and immanent in all existence—the Creator in His creative evolution, God in His Universe, God in His intelligent creatures such as man on this earth, which seems to me the great truth at which the modern mind is arriving, I cannot admit that the Bible is theocentric. This is not the kind of God prominent in the mind of the writers of the Old and New Testament. The God of the Bible is undoubtedly a monarch enthroned in a local Heaven above the universe who rules the world from outside. It does then matter very much if geocentric thought gave to the Bible a conception of God which the modern mind can no longer accept. That the Bible gave to man, as he was able to receive it, a glorious revelation of the righteousness and the love of God, is beyond all doubt. But all revelation is partial, provisional, progressive, and limited by man's imperfect knowledge and inability to receive a higher and fuller revelation. Is it incredible that with the increase of light and knowledge, and in the evolution and trend of thought, a further and truer revelation of what God is should come into the mind of man? On this subject we have the testimony of the Archbishop of York. In his sermon before the British Association in 1910, he said:—"Largely through the influence of science, a greater and grander conception of God has come into our minds, as of One dwelling within, however mysteriously transcending, the world of His making, present in all its processes, realising His will and purpose through them." That an Archbishop of the Church should have made such a momentous pronouncement as this, is indeed significant.

C. POYNDER.

Bristol.

[If space exists only for us and not for God, it may for all we know be as inaccurate to speak of God as immanent as to speak of Him as transcendent, for in both cases we are speaking of God in terms of space. The important thing for us is not the *mode* of God's existence but the essential nature of God and of our relation to Him. It is here that the Biblical Revelation of God is of supreme importance, and we venture to think that there are no signs or prospects of its being transcended. In both Old Testament and New Testament, God is presented as the source and centre of man's life, and man as morally responsible to Him. Of course we all recognise to-day that this Biblical revelation is progressive as is also our apprehension of it.—ED. *M.C.*]